

Amendments to the claims:

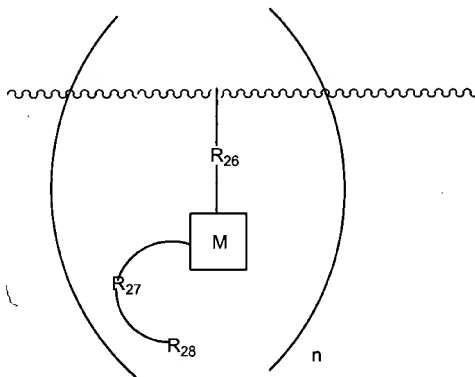
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-11 (cancelled)

12. (Currently amended) A composition comprising:

- a) a polymer;
- b) at least one MRI agent comprising:
 - i) at least one chelator comprising a paramagnetic metal ion; and,
 - ii) a PMALWMR peptide blocking moiety (SEQ ID NO: 11) covalently attached to said chelator, ~~such that which hinders the rapid exchange of water in the remaining coordination sites~~, wherein said blocking moiety ~~will interact with a target substance such that the exchange of water in the remaining coordination sites is increased upon interaction of said~~ PMALWMR peptide blocking moiety with a target substance, the T_1 of said MRI agent is decreased; and
- c) a linker group attaching said MRI agent to said polymer.

13. (Currently amended) An MRI agent according to claim 12 having the formula comprising:



wherein

~~~~~ is a polymer

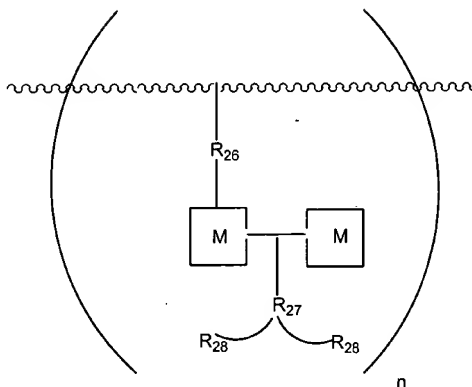
M is a chelator comprising a paramagnetic metal ion;

R<sub>26</sub> and R<sub>27</sub> are linker groups;

R<sub>28</sub> is a PMALWMR peptide blocking moiety (SEQ ID NO: 11); and,

n is an integer.

14. (Currently amended) An MRI agent according to claim 12 having the formula comprising:



wherein

~~~~~ is a polymer;

M is a chelator comprising a paramagnetic metal ion;

R₂₆ and R₂₇ are linker groups;

R₂₈ is a PMALWMR peptide blocking moiety (SEQ ID NO: 11); and

n is an integer.

15. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein said paramagnetic metal ion is selected from the group comprising gadolinium III (Gd⁺³ or Gd(III)), iron III (Fe⁺³ or Fe(III)), manganese II (Mn⁺² or Mn(II)), dysprosium (Dy⁺³ or Dy(III)), or chromium (Cr⁺³ or Cr(III)).

16. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claim 15 where said paramagnetic ion is Gd(III).

17. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein said linker groups are alkyl groups.

18. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claim 17 wherein said alkyl groups are substituted alkyl groups.

19. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein said linker groups are aryl groups.

20. (Currently amended) An MRI agent according to claim[[s]] 19 wherein said aryl groups are substituted aryl groups.

21. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein at least one of said linker groups are selected from the group comprising p-aminobenzyl, methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, pentyl, hexyl, propionic acid, aminobutyl, p-alkyl phenols, and 4-alkylimidazaole.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently amended) An MRI agent according to claims [[22]] 12, 13, or 14 wherein said PMALWMR peptide blocking moiety (SEQ ID NO: 11) binds to a metalloproteinase.

Claim 24 (cancelled)

25. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein said polymer is selected from the group comprising functionalized dextrans, styrene polymers, polyethylene, polyanionic polymers, polycationic polymers, and mixed polymers.

26. (Previously presented) An MRI agent according to claim 25 wherein said polycation is polylysine.

27. (Currently amended) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein said polymer comprises a plurality of said MRI agents.

28. (Currently amended) A method of magnetic resonance imaging of a cell, tissue or patient comprising administering an MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 to a cell, tissue or patient and rendering a magnetic resonance image of said cell, tissue or patient.

29. (Currently amended) An MRI agent according to claims 12, 13, or 14 wherein

~~~~~ is a dextran polymer;

M is a DOTA chelator comprising a Gd(III) paramagnetic metal ion;

R<sub>26</sub> and R<sub>27</sub> are alkyl linker groups;

R<sub>28</sub> is the peptide blocking moiety PMALWMR (SEQ ID NO: 11); and,

n is an integer.

30. (Cancelled)